

most advantageous to the interests of the parishioners, and they shall also have the property in all books, plate and other ornaments belonging to said churches and chapels, or any of them.

312-I. Churchwardens.

A senior warden and a junior warden shall be elected from among the members of the parish entitled to vote. The bylaws of the parish shall provide for the manner of conducting elections of such churchwardens, either by the members of the parish or by the vestry; their length of terms; and the manner of filling vacancies in the office of churchwarden. Their duties shall be as prescribed in the bylaws of the parish, and in the constitution and canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church and of the diocese in which such parish is located.

312J. Choosing and contracting with ministers and readers.

The vestry of every parish shall have full power and authority, from time to time, to choose one or more ministers or readers of the Protestant Episcopal Church, (heretofore called the Church of England,) to officiate in any church or chapel belonging to the parish, and to perform the other duties of a minister therein, for such time as the said vestry may think proper, and they may agree and contract with such minister or ministers, reader or readers, for his or their salary, and respecting the use and occupation of the parsonage house, or any glebe or other lands, or other property, if any, belonging to the parish, and on such terms and conditions as they may think reasonable and proper, and their choice and contract shall be entered among their proceedings; and upon the expiration of such contract, the said vestry may, in their discretion, renew their choice, or make a new contract, but if they do not incline so to do, their former choice and contract shall remain until they declare their desire to make a new choice or contract. Provided, however, that no action shall be taken heretofore contrary to provisions, consonant with public law, or the constitution and canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church or of the diocese of said church wherein the parish is located.

312K. When secretary of parish authorized to give certificates; admissibility of certificates as evidence in courts.

Wherever the vestry of any parish has neglected to procure a common seal, and until such common seal be procured, the secretary of such parish is authorized to give a certificate of the entry of any birth, marriage or burial entered in the books of said vestry, under the hand of such secretary, which shall be received in evidence in all courts of justice within this State; provided nevertheless, the said certificate is